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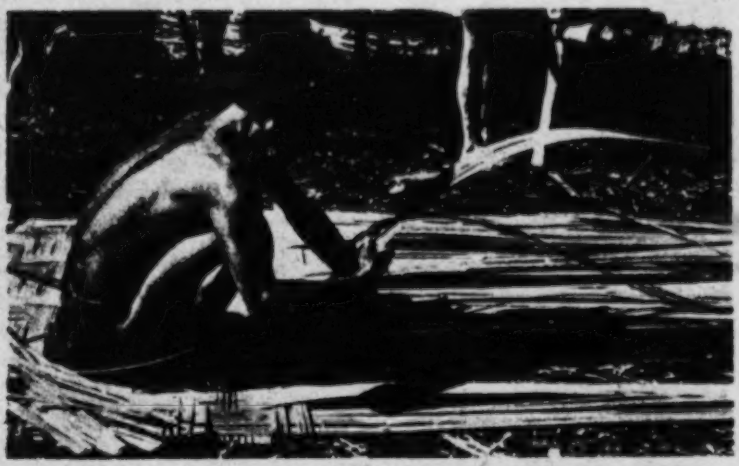

Weaving a house wall of split bamboo. Similar strips are used for flooring on bamboo crossbeams.

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Pulling in a floor beam.

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Talkalieta, the oldest woman in the village, with three orphaned grandchildren to support, works daily in the fields.

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Padafan's mother gathers the bean crop and his grandmother shells it.

Fuimai, the village trollop, measures loops of cord for her belt. Note the bean-threshing mat.

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An old grandmother spends a quiet morning at home weaving a basket.

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Carvings of village guardian spirits, familiars, and the like are all singularly crude, and no value is attached to them once they have been used for sacrificial purposes. It is not unusual to see these "sacred" carvings lying on the ground rotting away. (It was always considered a windfall to be able to sell me one. Also, I found it impossible to appeal to pride in order to procure good specimens for the museum collection I was making, and only by repeatedly refusing to pay for the poor ones did I get better examples of handicrafts.)

Although they are capable of building large and imposing houses, about a third of the houses were of the shed or field-hut type, which can be thrown together in a few days. Even an imposing new lineage house will have the edges of its thatch torn to shreds within a year by its owners, who pull out a handful whenever they want a torch at night. As I have already indicated, tattooing and tooth blackening are so unskillfully done that they fail frequently to be permanent. Basketry is of the simplest sort, with a minimum of overlay decorations. The Atimelangers have never acquired the arts of weaving known on the coast, of pottery produced in villages not two hours away, or of *cire perdue* casting known in the eastern part of the island. This is true despite the fact that they know the processes fairly well, and there are no taboos or restrictions that I could discover against the practice of such crafts.

Their mythology is confused and unstructuralized. Their knowledge of genealogies is so deficient that many individuals do not know their more remote Male House kin. Ceremonial procedure is almost always a source of fumbling and of heated argument as to proper procedure. In respect to some of these items, it is possible that they represent newly or partially introduced features which were not clearly understood in the first place, or else features that were survivalistic. Regardless of the possible historical situation, the fact remains that little is done by way of elaboration and integration, and no effort is made to master the resources of the environment.

From the point of view of depth psychology all this might well point to a weakness in ego development. This would be in agreement with my suggestions in the preceding chapters, that it is precisely in the realm of ego development that the Atimelang child suffers the greatest handicaps and receives the least encouragement. The rewards are few and meager in childhood as well as in adult life. Men want to be rich; they may have the drive, but more than drive is necessary for successful accomplishment. Consistent training and the assurance of reward (or penalty) are essential to learning. These two factors are largely absent. It is not astonishing, therefore, that so many men accept the

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[159] as we were going, Alurkomale came and chased us with a stick. I fell in the ravine and Alurkomale caught me by the hair. Then he let me go and said, "Go eat your beans. Tomorrow I'll come and settle this." That night we didn't go back to the village. We went to a field house, made a fire, and slept there. We didn't eat the beans. We had thrown them away. Early the next morning we heard people coming down from Padalehi beating gongs [the procedure when people are very indignant over a big theft]. We four ran and hid at Tungpe. The people went on to our village. Our parents called us to come, so we went. Our parents talked strongly. They said they would pay Alurkomale with beans, but he demanded four pigs. Our elders were angry and said we hadn't stolen pigs, we had taken beans. They would pay only in beans. Alurkomale said if they could put the beans back on the vine he would accept beans. So our parents decided to pay. I had to pay a red cloth and three cents, Manikari paid one cent and five arrows, Manineni paid five cents and one arrow, and Fanmani paid six cents and a red headcloth.

[Earliest memories?] The first thing I can remember, before I could walk, was that father hung out his gongs, made his areca altar, and fed it a pig and a goat. Mother made a very small rice cone and put it on a serving dish. I grabbed it and spoiled it. I don't remember their dividing up the food with people. [What did mother do when he spoiled the rice cone?] She told me not to do that and gave me a coconut-shell dish with rice that was left in the pot.

[What is the second thing he remembered?] People were making a garden near Ayakingliking. I was still crawling at this time. When the time came to harvest the rice, mother carried me there. Mother cut
● [160] and split bamboo to weave a basket. She put the bamboo to one side. I wound a strip of it around my neck, wounding my hand and cutting my neck in two places. [People were very afraid of bamboo cuts.] An old woman from Bakudatang, called Kawangmai, came. She had a knife in her hand. She saw I had cut my hand and said, "Oh, you have cut your hand; I guess I had better cut it off." She acted as though she were going to cut off my hands. I still remember that. [This sort of threat play was common with children.]

When I was just beginning to walk, my grandmother Tilapeda died. I sat next to her body, which was already covered with a shroud. I lifted up the shroud and looked at her. My mother was angry and took me away and hit my head. [Question.] Maybe I was afraid. I thought she was still alive. I didn't know she was dead. At that time my father

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159 bring us some more in your basket." [Did you want to?] Yes. They were my elder brothers, and so I said I would. [What did your mother say?] She said that since my elder brothers had eaten it, I had better take them some more.

[I asked whether she felt that they usually had less food in their home than others had in theirs. She didn't seem to grasp the idea.] If [561 #478] one is hungry and hasn't food, one can work for another person and will be given a bundle of corn in payment. Or if one hasn't enough, a [572] friend may help by inviting one to come dig in the garden for tubers. [Did your mother have such a friend?] Yes, Kolangkalieta. [The mother of her own friend, Kolata. The mother is also called simply Kolang in this account.]

[Long pause. I told her to go ahead. She sighed heavily. This was the first time she had permitted herself this sort of emotional expression.] Occasionally, if Kolangkalieta sat all day and didn't go to her garden, mother would put tubers she had dug into a calabash dish and give them to her. When Kolangkalieta went to File, where she had a garden, she would bring us back kunari nuts and give them to us to eat.

[I asked about the elder sister, Falepang, who was sick.] Once when I went playing, Falepang and mother stayed in the house. When they cooked, mother said, "Don't save any for Lomani; eat it all up." [Why?] [571] Because mother told me to wait until the food had all been served before beginning to eat and said I should eat with my sisters, all of us together. So I said, "If that is so, I don't want to eat." And I went away. Then Falepang took one spoonful for herself and the other she put aside for me. She ate every other spoonful; she hid the half she had saved for me, so mother would not see it. Then when I came home Falepang called to me to come up, and she gave me the food she had saved. She said, "Mother is often angry, and she didn't want to save food for you, but here is some." Then Falepang sent me for greens. We added them to what Falepang had cooked, and we ate together. Then Falepang said I should go fetch some bamboo so that she could make me a basket. When I went out, Falepangmai and Kowainmai wanted to come too; so all three of us went. We brought it back, and Falepang wove us baskets. She made big ones for the older ones and a [575] little one for me. She overlaid them with raw bamboo. She knew how to overlay either the whole basket or only the top and bottom. She said, "The big ones are for you, and you can fetch corn and greens in them. The little one is for Lomani, and she can fetch grasshoppers."

Once there was a dance in Abatkawai. The day before, Falepangmai